



**Indiana State
Department of Health**
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TO: School Administrators (K-12)

FROM: Judy Monroe, MD
Indiana State Health Commissioner

DATE: August 10, 2009

RE: Updated Guidance from CDC

On August 7, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) released its “Guidance for State & Local Public Health Officials and School Administrators for School (K-12) Responses to Influenza During the 2009-2010 School Year” and accompanying communication toolkit. It is designed to decrease exposure to seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu while limiting disruption of day-to-day activities. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide basic information and communications resources to help school administrators implement CDC’s recommendations. The CDC has also released a Technical Report that includes detailed information on the reasons for the strategies presented in the guidance document.

This guidance document expands upon earlier school guidance documents by providing a menu of tools that school and health officials can choose from based on conditions in their area. The guidance also provides a checklist for making decisions at the local level. **The guidance specifically includes recommended school responses under conditions with similar severity as spring 2009 and under conditions with increased severity compared with spring 2009.** Among other topics, the CDC addresses the separation of ill students and staff, when to stay home, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, routine cleaning, active screening, and school dismissals.

Please note that the new guidance applies to any flu virus circulating during the 2009-2010 school year, not only 2009 H1N1 flu. In addition, this guidance recommends that, based on current flu conditions, students and staff with flu-like illness stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). This is a shorter time period from the previous guidance which recommended that sick students and staff stay home 7 days after symptoms begin. The 7 day period away from school for sick students and staff would still be recommended under more severe flu conditions. The decision to dismiss students should be made locally and in consideration of the risks and benefits of school dismissals. The CDC notes that based on the experience in spring 2009, the negative consequences of dismissing students from school may outweigh the likely benefits.

The guidance can be found online at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/schoolguidance.htm>.

The toolkit can be found online at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/>.

The technical report can be found online at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/technicalreport.htm>.